Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare

32 | 2015
Nouvelles lectures de *Love's Labour's Lost*

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Electronic version
URL: http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/3289
DOI: 10.4000/shakespeare.3289
ISSN: 2271-6424

Publisher
Société Française Shakespeare

Electronic reference
Christine Sukic, « "I smell false Latin, dunghill for *unguem*": Odours and Aromas in *Love's Labour's Lost* », *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* [Online], 32 | 2015, Online since 20 March 2015, connection on 23 July 2020. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/3289 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/shakespeare.3289

"I smell false Latin, dunghill for *unguem*": Odours and Aromas in *Love's Labour's Lost*

Christine Sukic

1 The smell of a dramatic work is difficult to assess. A play is a text that may include olfactory metaphors, but being also a staged work, we may want to try and imagine what a play smelled like on stage. In an article on "The Smell of *Macbeth*", Jonathan Gil Harris tried to imagine the smell (or the stench) of the Shakespearean stage.[1] Evoking the "thunder and lightning" of the stage directions and the technical construction of such an indication in *Macbeth* (1606) he explored the embodied reaction to the play for early modern playgoers and what sort of "archive of smell" it would have elicited then. Plays, presumably, had different smells. For thunder, squibs were commonly used, Harris tells us, and that type of firework produced a "pungent stink",[2] an association that Cotgrave confirmed when he suggested "a little fart, or Squib", to translate the French word *Petereau*.[3] According to our cultural model, *Macbeth* would thus have smelt bad, being steeped in the "smoke of hell" (I.v.49) as well as the "smell of blood" (V.i.42). Other plays are associated with different kinds of smells. In *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606), Vindice and Hippolito use perfume to trick the Duke into kissing the skull of Vindice's dead lover Gloriana, while Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) immediately suggests the scatological with Subtle's attack on Face at the beginning of the play, "Thy worst. I fart at thee" (I.i.2). The play's coprophilous interest is corroborated by the later episode of the "privy" (III.v.78) where Dapper is locked up until well into act V, when he admits to having been "overcome" by "the fume" (V.iv.5). The play is inundated by various smells, actual or metaphorical, so much so that Ben Jonson hoped that his dedicatee, Lady Mary Wroth, would find the odour of the play "acceptable" in his prefatory letter.[4]

2 Ben Jonson's olfactory construction in his play has another specificity, which is the context of "the sickness", that is to say, the plague, mentioned in "The Argument" of

the play and in various direct and indirect references in the text itself, since it is an important part of the plot.

3 It is difficult to separate a history of early modern English theatre (especially in London) from a history of early modern disease and the context of the various plague epidemics at the turn of the century, since major outbreaks of the plague always meant a closing of the theatres in order to try and protect Londoners from the pestilence. In his book on "gallants", *The guls horne-booke*, it is interesting that Thomas Dekker, when describing the playhouses, should use such expressions as "a stinking breath of hisses" when he evoke s the "Comick Theater", or "the Breath of the great Beast"[5] vanishing into thin air in the theatres. London was affected by the plague several times between 1570 and 1670. Ernest B. Gilman indicates frightening figures for London and its environs during that period: 225,000 deaths. In 1593, he reports, "more than 15,000 people died — one out of every eight Londoners, given a total estimated population of 123,000".[6] *Love's Labour's Lost* was written and performed during that period. The plague, or pestilence, was thought to be caused by bad smells or "miasmas". Contemporary plague writers, such as Thomas Dekker, made it clear. So did earlier narratives of the plague by Ovid or Boccaccio. Shakespeare himself uses references to pestilent air, such as when, in *Richard II*, Henry Bolingbroke asks of his son: "Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son? / 'Tis full three months since I did see him last. / If any plague hang over us, 'tis he" (V.iii.1-3). Bearing these contexts in mind, I would like to address the question of the smell of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and wonder in what way the olfactory system of the play could inform us about its aesthetics. More specifically, I would like to look at the possibilities of inversion offered by olfactory metaphors and how they give us a clue concerning the reversibility of language.

4 From the strict point of view of stagecraft, the play does not appear to be particularly fragrant or smelly, since most stage props are letters or messages. The deer hunted by the princess in act IV is probably killed by a crossbow, as was the usage then, and therefore no odorous gunpowder would have been used. The play does not call for any specific smell and the props used are not likely to create any particular olfactory impression on the spectators, so that our sensory approach to the play depends almost solely on the metaphorical level of the text.

5 Smells are social constructions. Good and bad smells vary and our perception of them depends on several factors. What we may perceive as a stench can be sensed in a different way for another culture or may have been sensed differently in another time period, as Alain Corbin showed in his history of smell in modern France, *The Foul and the Fragrant*[7]. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the sense of smell is part of a social and cultural construct according to which the upper and/or educated classes are supposed to give out sweet fragrances while the lower and/or uneducated social classes are associated with bad odours. Armado suggests that rhetoric can be obscured by "sweet smoke" (III.i. 52), a phrase that points both to the dangers of an intricate and complex use of language and to its admirable plasticity, hence its decidedly fragrant smell. Speaking can thus be equated to giving out a "sigh" (III.i.56), an image which is commonly found in Petrarchan rhetoric, as Ferdinand points out, albeit with a negative connotation, when he accuses Longaville and Dumaine of having read out love poetry: "[I] / Saw sighs reek from you" (IV.iii.132).

6 For the pedants of the play, the smell of learning is fragrant and Holofernes associates Ovid's *Naso* with the "flowers of fancy" found in Berowne's letter: "Ovidio Naso was the

man; and why indeed 'Naso', but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention?" (IV.ii.110-111). Ovid is supposed to be the epitome of poetic invention, but Holofernes, using Ovid's Latin name *Naso*, gives him a nasal appendix sensitive enough to sniff out the flowers of fancy, thus giving language, and especially rhetoric (where those flowers are to be found), a material dimension (that of the nose) as well as a metaphorical one (the flowers of fancy are smells, the most elusive of sensations). In Holofernes' mind, olfactory sensations serve to oppose the stench of ignorance to the sweet smell of learning. In the early modern period, certain smells were thought to induce memory, such as incense. In Thomas Tomkis's *Lingua: or the Combat of the tongue and the five senses*, Olfactus describes how, through the use of incense, he can "strengthen memory" in order to "make mans spirits more apt for things divine".[8] However, incense was no longer used in English churches at the end of the sixteenth century, being associated with Roman Catholicism. Apart from this specific fragrance, the perception of smell is, more generally, based on memory, as Holly Dugan has showed.[9] It is thus not surprising that the metaphor should be used in a remark that refers to one of the most popular sources of early modern literature.

7 The smell of the play, though, is made up of several elements and goes through several phases, changing according to the characters present on stage. When Costard enters in act III, scene i, the implication that the "sweet smoke" of rhetoric previously evoked by Armado is now turning into a bad smell, is established by the clown's various misunderstandings and his inability to perceive the subtleties of language. When Armado asks Moth to give him "*l'envoy*" (60), he gives rise to a network of scatological images, first because Costard mishears the word "enigma" and understands "egma" instead (60-61), which he seems to take for some sort of enema or clyster-pipe. As William Carroll explains it in his footnotes to the Cambridge edition, the word "*l'envoy*" had already been associated with the scatological by Thomas Nashe in *Have With You in Saffron Walden* (1596) when mocking Gabriel Harvey's pedantic use of the same word, referring to Harvey's "excrementall conceipts" and "a third *Lenvoy*, like a fart after a good Stoole".[10] In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the poetic term turns into a laxative for Costard, who is freed (and cured of constipation) by Armado: "and now you will be my purgation and let me loose" (110-111). But "purgation" also has a figurative meaning, that of a purification from sins or any kind of defilement, a word that is thus appropriate for Costard's situation, that of having been caught in an "obscene and most preposterous event" (I.i. 230). Patricia Parker has written extensively on the word "preposterous" and its structural implications in several of Shakespeare's plays. She explains that:

> "Preposterous" comes from *posterus* ("after" or "behind") and *prae* ("in front" or "before") and connotes a reversal of "post" for "pre", back for front, second for first, sequel for beginning. As contemporary definitions of the term make clear, it is hence available [...] for inversions that disrupt a "proper" or "natural" sequence.[11]

In this case, a man following a woman. As Patricia Parker notes, the term can also imply sexual practices condemned as "unnatural", or "preposterous venery", a phrase used, among others, by Thomas Heywood in *Gynaikeion* (1624), in the part entitled "De Laenis, or of Bawdes".[12] The relation between the posterior and the scatological is further exploited in IV.ii. It is first suggested by Dull's malapropism when he says that "the pollution holds in the exchange" (IV.ii.39), pollution having connotations of

uncleanliness, dirt and impurity. Of course, the most potent example is Holofernes' sarcastic remark:

> COSTARD. thou hadst it *ad dunghill*, at the fingers' ends, as they say.
> HOLOFERNES. O, I smell false Latin: 'dunghill' for *unguem.*
> (V.i.63-4).

8 Holofernes' remark is naturally intended for Nathanael and is meant to be lost on Costard himself. Thus, the smell of dung (equated to "false Latin") is used as a cultural marker purposed to label Costard as a bad-smelling fool. The mistake also points to the reversibility of smells, as well as of language. The whole passage is studded with scatological references, as if the stench emitted by Costard invaded the scene. The conversation is immediately drawn towards the "posteriors" (V.i.72 and 74), under the influence of Armado, a word which is, according to Holofernes, "well culled" (75-76), with an obvious reference to the French *cul*. The smell becomes sharper, as Armado evokes the "royal finger thus dally[ing] with [his] excrement" (83-84).

9 Even if Costard and Dull are invariably (and sometimes unwittingly) drawn towards the lower parts of the body by the polysemic possibilities of language, the pedants of the play do not escape bad odours. Through a sense of inversion, the scatological further invades the play and its characters in its "posterior" part, in particular during the Pageant of the Nine Worthies that turns on itself to become an antimasque, thus inverting the intrinsic heroic meaning of the show. When Nathaniel plainly declares that he is "Alisander" (v.ii.554), he is betrayed by his body odour. Boyet thinks his nose "stands too right" (555) compared with the traditional descriptions of Alexander's nasal appendix but, more to the point, Berowne clearly expresses the odoriferous impossibility of that statement through an antiphrasis: "Your nose smells 'no' in this, most tender-smelling knight" (556), since, according to Plutarch, Alexander's sweat did not smell bad or, as Montaigne put it, "yeelded a sweet-smelling savour".[13] Berowne's assertion is confirmed by Costard, when he definitely sends Nathaniel to the privy by reinterpreting Alexander's coat of arms. Instead of a lion on a throne, he sees that "Your lion, that holds his pole-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax" (565-566), the "close-stool" being a seat in a privy, and Ajax a clear reference to an early modern toilet, that had just been invented by Sir John Harington when Shakespeare wrote the play, and described in his *A new discourse of a stale subject, called the metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596), with the now-famous pun on "Ajax / a jakes".

10 Holofernes is also a victim of that olfactory inversion based on language, as he announces that he represents Judas and is careful enough to signal the heroic dimension of his part ("Not Iscariot, sir. 'Judas I am, yclept Maccabaeus'", V.ii.583-584), yet language, a veritable Judas, betrays him when Dumaine and Berowne put forward the posterior part of the word ("For the latter end of his name. / For the 'ass' to the Jude?", 612-613).

11 As for Armado, the sweet breath of his heroism is definitely polluted in the same scene. He presents his Hector as being "breathed" (V.ii.636), that is to say, in good wind, in good condition, but Hector's sweet breath soon turns to a foul smell: "The sweet war-man is dead and rotten" (644). This olfactory change is announced by the lords' jocular reaction. By interrupting Armado, they turn his "gift" from Mars into a "gilt nutmeg" (629), a word that prompts a sequence of olfactory objects, followed by a series of sexual puns:

BEROWNE. A lemon.
LONGAVILLE. Stuck with cloves.
DUMAINE. No, cloven (630-632).

A gilt nutmeg was a nutmeg glazed with egg yolk and was, according to Donald Watts, "a common Christmas gift, and, encased in silver, they were worn at night as an inducement to sleep".[14] As for the lemon stuck with cloves, it is a kind of pomander that was mainly used, at the time, to flavour and purify a kind of wine used against disease.[15]

12 *Love's Labour's Lost* is thus the seat of a first sensory phenomenon: the "sweet smoke" of pedantic knowledge gradually turning to a stench that tends to overwhelm the stage and inconvenience the other characters. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we also find the same sense of inversion through Bottom's misuse of language when Thisbe's sweet breath turns to "flowers of odious savours" (III.i.70). In *Love's Labour's Lost*, olfactory metaphors seem to be used as claims for legitimacy: legitimacy of knowledge, social legitimacy against the illegitimacy of illiteracy and the lower social classes.

13 In trying to define an olfactory system in the play, we could say that there is another type of smell that is vying with the stench of the social other. That smell is part of an attempt at establishing the presence of a scent, a fragrance even, that would be socially and aesthetically acceptable, but that also undergoes a process of inversion. The text of the play uses the word "sweet" about 75 times, not always in the sense of "fragrant" though. In the early modern period, "sweet" had several meanings but one of the dominant ones was a positive type of smell. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the second meaning is "fragrant" or "scented"; the third is "free from offensive or disagreeable taste or smell" or "in sound and wholesome condition". The sweetness of the play must be related to its debt to love poetry and in particular the Petrarchan style of rhetoric that is often used (most of the time in jest). There is a distinct smell of "sweetness" in the play that could be overwhelming to the point of cloyingness; as to its "wholesome" quality, it also has to be qualified. The ladies have "sweet breaths" (V.ii.167) that are able to "puff out" the Muscovites as if they were tapers. This is, by the way, one of the *topoi* deliberately misused by Shakespeare in Sonnet 130 when he writes that, "in some perfumes is there more delight / Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks". Ferdinand's breath is "royal sweet" (V.ii.517), in Armado's words, while Armado's soul is "sweet" (III.i.107) and tongues can speak "sweetly" (III.i.144), as if speech and breath were equivalent, by an effect of synaesthesia. Boyet also uses the image about the young men in a jocular way when he says that they will "Blow like sweet roses in the summer air" (V.ii.293).

14 The rhetoric of Petrarchan poetry abounds in love sighs and sweet breaths. The sigh is one of the most frequent motifs of love poetry and one that is as evanescent as a smell. Breath and smell were related for early modern anatomists because it was only through breathing that invisible particles of odours could "touch" the brain.[16] In the play, Cupid is, as Berowne calls him, "Th'anointed sovereign of sighs and groans" (III.i.159) and makes him "sigh for her" (177). The sigh is an expression of love, tainted with melancholy. Hence Armado's use of them, even if, at first, he "think[s] scorn to sigh" (I.ii.53), because he is not sure it is in keeping with his status as a great soldier, yet he does not hesitate to sigh at Moth when he is pleased with him: "By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face" (III.i.56). Sighs are also frequently used as a metaphor of language in love poetry: Samuel Daniel uses the image in the first sonnet to Delia,

writing "Heere have I summ'd my sighes" in the first sonnet (l. 7-8),[17] and Berowne draws on the same type of imagery when he says "I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, groan" (III.i.181). In such type of rhetoric, language seems to lose its materiality: the written word of love poetry is first and foremost a spoken word, and even a sigh with no substance, which is in keeping with the sonneteers' frequent assertion of speechlessness as they try to express their impossible love.

15 Sighs are usually a counterpoint to "sweet breath", but breath can also be a part of the language of love, as spoken by the lover who is then "out of breath" if he loses his capacity for speech. In *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, the speaker of Barnabe Barnes's sonnets laments that he should "Wast breathlesse wordes, and breathfull sighes increase" (sonnet XVIII)[18]. Longaville, in his sonnet of act IV, scene 3, uses the same image but adds the idea of an exchange of breaths when he says that "Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is / Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine, / Exhal'st this vapour-vow, in thee it is" (60-63).

16 We could say that conversation in the play is based on an exchange of breath (the Princess uses the phrase "the converse of breath", V.ii.709), but not so much of "vapour-vow[s]". Conversation does not produce sweet-smelling air, but sourness that could possibly induce the spreading of diseases. Montaigne, in his essay on smells and odours, points to the possibility of getting sick through conversation:

> ...yet am I little subject to those popular diseases, that are taken by conversation, and bred by the contagion of the ayre: And I have escaped those of my time, of which there hath been many and severall kinds, both in the Townes about me, and in our Armie.[19]

17 Thus is Navarre "infected" (II.i.226). Love, like the plague, can be caught through the sense of smell, as Moth describes it in a jocular way: "sometime through the nose as if you snuffed up love by smelling love" (III.i.11-2). Interestingly, there are several references to the plague in the play, or to love as a disease that infects, which is another *topos* of Petrarchan poetry: to love is to be sick, or to have a fever, as when Berowne talks of love as a "plague" ("It is a plague / That Cupid will impose for my neglect / Of his almighty dreadful little might", III.i.178-80). In the same vein, Barnabe Barnes devotes one sonnet to love sickness in his sonnet sequence:

> Then did I sweate, and swelt, mine eyes daze
> Till that a burning fever had opprest me:
> Which made me faint, no Phisicke hath represt me.
> For I trye all, yet for to make me sound
> Ay me! no grasse, nor Phisicke may be found.[20]

18 In Dumaine's sonnet of act IV, scene 3, love is also a sickness caught through the air (the lover is "sick to death", 99) even though the air is defined as a pleasant one, under the influence of a "blossom" (95). The wind, because it can breathe and thus may find a passage towards the lover, is characterised by its wholesomeness:

> [...] the lover, sick to death,
> Wished himself the heaven's breath.
> "Air", quoth he, "thy cheeks may blow;
> Air, would I might triumph so!"
> (IV.iii.99-102)

19 The play also contains several references to death before Marcadé's entrance, some indirect, or even hypothetical, such as the allusion to Katherine's dead sister at V.ii.13, who had a "heavy" (14) and not a "light" (15) heart like her sister's. The possibility of the air being marred by the smell of snuff also hovers over this passage when Katherine tells Rosaline that she may "mar the light by taking it in snuff" (22). Finally, there is at least one whole passage devoted to the plague, when Berowne admits to Rosaline that he is "sick" (V.ii.417), as well as the other three who are also "infected" (420), so much so that the words "Lord have mercy on us" (419) could be written all over them, as they were on the doors of plague houses at the time. Berowne makes it clear by saying that "They have the plague" (421) and by using a pun on "tokens" (423), a word that refers both to the love tokens given by the lords to the women, as well as to the "plague spots", the signs of the plague. The word "token" was frequently used in a medical context in the sense of "symptom". For instance, in *A defensative against the plague* (1593), in the chapter entitled "Evill signes", Simon Kellwaye writes:

> When the botch waxeth so hard that by no meanes it will come to suppuration, but resisteth whatsoever is done unto it for the farthering thereof, and so returneth in againe into the inwarde partes soddenly, is a token of soddaine death at hand, and so is it if either before or after it is broken it looke of a blewish colour, or of divers colours like the raynbow round about it.[21]

20 The double meaning of the word is thus fairly established: a token is a sign that is part of a semiotics of disease.[22] Interestingly, in the dialogue between Rosaline and Berowne, the infection or visitation is caught not through the sense of smell (which was thought to be the most conducive of the disease) but through that of sight: "They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes" (V.ii.421). There is a form of correspondence between an early modern discourse on the plague, in which the disease was caught through the air and then became a visible sign on the skin, and the language of love, in which the "token" is an attempt at giving it substantiality and visibility. It points to the necessity to "see" love and give it visible signs, which is all the more necessary in the play as the only "banquet" the young men have access to (through their oath) is that of the mind and not of the body (I.i.24-25).

21 The use of the sense of smell is not surprising in a play that is based on insubstantiality: that of the plot, which is thin as thin air, and that of love, which is lacking in clear definition. It is there, and not there, absent and present as sonneteers would say.[23]

22 The sense of smell is based on that evanescence, and the idea of the ephemeral. It does not last but remains as an olfactory memory. It is difficult to word, and calls for metaphors, as Holly Dugan points out in her book *The Ephemeral History of Perfume*: "Metaphor is the apparatus through which invisible smells are 'made to appear'".[24] Dogberry, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, unwittingly confirms this literary dimension of the smell with his malapropism: "Comparisons are odorous" (III.v.16).[25] Interestingly, in his essay on odours and smells, when Montaigne tries to define the ideal smell of a woman, he ends up defining it as an absence, while the presence of smell is suspicious—an idea that is frequent in the early modern period:

> The most exquisit and sweetest savour of a woman, it is to smell of nothing; and sweet, well-smelling, strange savours, may rightly be held suspicious in such as use them; and a man may lawfully thinke, that who useth them,

> doth-it to cover some naturall defect: whence proceede these ancient Poeticall sayings.
> To smell sweet, is to stinke.[26]

23 Smells tend towards nothingness, and it is their very ephemeral quality that makes them popular in poetry to define what cannot be represented, what cannot be defined. Montaigne goes as far as saying that, as a young man, he kept on his moustache the olfactory memory of "The close-smacking, sweetnesse-moving, love-alluring, and greedismirking kisses of youth".[27] As an example of an olfactory metaphor that represents what cannot be represented, Shakespeare uses the image of the distillation of perfume in Sonnet 5 in order to define the beauty of the male addressee:

> Then were not summer's distillation left
> A liquid pris'ner pent in walls of glass,
> Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
> Nor it nor no remembrance what it was.
> But flow'rs distilled, though they with winter meet,
> Leese but their show, their substance still lives sweet. (9-14)

24 To quote Michael Clody, the olfactory image constitutes a shift from the visual and helps define beauty as "unreachable".[28] However, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, olfactory references or images do not only serve to express the inexpressible, but are also used in an attempt to give substance, to give materiality to language. This is the case in Petrarchan poetry, in which images of the plague are meant to counterbalance the sweetness of the nosegay, as we may call it. Samuel Daniel evokes the perfume of Delia's breath in sonnet XVIII. Delia should give up all her attributes, among them her particular odour ("T'Arabian odors give thy breathing sweete", 6), so that the speaker may lose his sickness, in the last line of the sonnet: "So shalt thou cease to plague, and I to paine" (14).[29] So in this case, the poet equates the "breathing sweete" and the "plague". This idea of a correspondence between good and bad odours could be read as a Neo-Platonic motif but it also offers aesthetic possibilities on the question of representation. Giordano Bruno, in his satirical "Argument" to the *Heroic Frenzies*, describes women's beauty as a series of metonymies, one of which being "that stink", and concludes that it "deceives us as a species of beauty".[30]

25 Shakespeare is part of this aesthetic attempt at giving substance to the insubstantial and at exploring the ephemeral. The olfactory is the perfect image of that absent representation: it is very difficult to define. Hence its presence in early modern sonnets, in which language loses its substance to the point of silence. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the sweetness of the air breathed by the young men and women, combined with the stench of the plague and the scatological references, reflects the intermediary status of the sense of smell—between the "noble" senses of hearing and sight, and the basest ones of touch and taste[31]—and its dual literary status as a metaphor, both elusive and full of substance. Finally, the play stands in an intermediate state, between the bad odours of public theatres, and the more refined aromas (to early modern noses) of the private theatres or even court performances, attested by its stage history.[32]

NOTES

1. Jonathan Gil Harris, "The Smell of *Macbeth*", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 4, Winter 2007, p. 465-486.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 485.

3. Randle Cotgrave, *A dictionarie of the French and English tongues*, London, Printed by Adam Islip, 1611, n.p.

4. "If what I offer bear an acceptable odour…", Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*, ed. F. H. Mares, London, Methuen, 1971.

5. Thomas Dekker, *The guls horne-booke*, London, 1609, p. 2 and 28. Accessed via EEBO.

6. Ernest B. Gilman, *Plague Writing in Early Modern England*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 129-130.

7. Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant. Odour and the French Social Imagination*, transl. Miriam Kochan, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1986.

8. Thomas Tomkis, *Lingua: Or the Combat of the Tongue, and the Five Senses for Superiority*, London, 1607, sig. H4^{r}, quoted by Jonathan Gil Harris, *op.cit.*, p. 481.

9. Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume. Scent and Sense in Early Modern England*, Baltimore, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

10. William C. Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

11. Patricia Parker, "Preposterous Events", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 2, Summer 1992, p. 186-213, here p. 193.

12. Thomas Heywood, *Gynaikeion: or, Nine bookes of various history. Concerning women inscribed by ye names of ye nine Muses*, London, 1624, p. 343. Accessed via EEBO.

13. Montaigne, "Of smels and odours", *Essays*, transl. John Florio, 1613 edition, p. 171, accessed via EEBO.

14. Donald Watts, *Elsevier's Dictionary of Plant Lore*, Oxford, Academic, 2007, p. 268.

15. See for instance Thomas Lupton who, in *A thousand notable things, of sundry sortes Wherof some are wonderfull, some straunge, some pleasant, divers necessary, a great sort profitable and many very precious* (London, 1579) explains that "Wine wyll be pleasant in taste and in savour, and cullour: it wyll much please thee if an Orenge, or a Lymon (stickt round about with Cloaves) be hanged within the vessell that it touche not the Wyne. And so the Wyne wyll be preserved from foystines and evyll savor", p. 37. Accessed via EEBO.

16. See Holly Dugan, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

17. Samuel Daniel, *Delia and Rosamond Augmented. Cleopatra*, London, 1594, sonnet 1.

18. Barnabe Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe Sonnettes, madrigals, elegies and odes*, London, J. Wolfe, 1593, p. 14. Accessed via EEBO.

19. Montaigne, *Essays*, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

20. Barnes, Sonnet XXII, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

21. Simon Kellwaye, *A defensative against the plague contayning two partes or treatises*, London, 1593, p. 16. Accessed via EEBO.

22. On this, see Nichole DeWall, "'Sweet recreation barred': The Case for Playgoing in Plague-Time", in Rebecca Totaro and Ernest B. Gilman, eds, *Representing the Plague in Early Modern England*, New York and London, Routledge, 2011, p. 133-149, here p. 146. Ernest B. Gilman also gives a very good analysis of this passage in *Plague Writing in Early Modern England*, talking about a conceit that "bespeaks the plague only to suppress, and even mock, its terrifying reality by turning it into the figure of an amatory dalliance" (*op. cit.*, p. 53). He also relates this passage to the penance imposed by Rosaline at the end of the play when Berowne has to spend a year visiting the "speechless sick" (*ibid.*).

23. Philip Sidney uses this oxymoron in his sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella*, as in sonnet 60 about Stella, "Whose presence absence, absence presence is" (l. 13).
24. Holly Dugan, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
25. I would like to thank William C. Carroll and Henry Woodhuysen for drawing my attention to the relevance of this line.
26. Montaigne, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Michael Clody, "Shakespeare's 'alien pen': Self-Substantial Poetics in the Young Man Sonnets", *Criticism*, Summer 2008, vol. 50, no. 3, p. 471-499, here p. 485.
29. Samuel Daniel, *op. cit.*, sonnet 19.
30. Giordano Bruno, *The Heroic Frenzies*, transl. Paul Eugene Memmo, Jr., Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1966, p. 60.
31. See Paulette Choné, "Bellange ou le parfum de la *maniera*", in Didier Souiller, ed., *Maniérisme et littérature*, Paris, Orizons, 2013, p. 81-91, here p. 85.
32. On the different smells attached to the public and the private theatres, see especially Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, Cambridge, CUP, 1996, p. 38-40.

ABSTRACTS

The "smell" of *Love's Labour's Lost* could be assessed through its original staging and the context of early modern playhouses, but its olfactory content is mainly metaphorical. The pedants of the play try to impose the sweet smell of knowledge as a social marker that they oppose to the stench of ignorance characterising the lower social classes. The play is also studded with fragrant metaphors that can be traced back to the Petrarchan tradition. However, in both cases, the smells undergo a process of reversibility and the play is often steeped in scatological metaphors as well as images of pestilent air—probably reflecting the context of the plague in early modern London. More importantly, the olfactory metaphors inform us on the aesthetics of the play and give us a clue about the reversibility of language.

On pourrait tenter de déterminer l'« odeur » de *Love's Labour's Lost* en pensant à sa mise en scène à l'époque de Shakespeare dans un théâtre londonien, mais en fait, son contenu olfactif est essentiellement métaphorique : les pédants de la pièce tentent d'imposer l'idée d'un savoir à l'odeur agréable dont ils font un marqueur social opposé à la puanteur de l'ignorance représentée par les personnages de classes sociales inférieures ; la pièce est également envahie de métaphores odorantes qui rappellent la tradition pétrarquiste. Cependant, dans les deux cas, Shakespeare fait subir à ces odeurs un processus de réversibilité : la pièce est souvent dominée par des métaphores scatologiques ou des images d'air pestilentiel—sans doute un rappel du contexte des épidémies de peste dans le Londres de la première modernité. Enfin, les métaphores olfactives sont un indice de l'esthétique de la pièce et nous éclairent sur la question de la réversibilité du langage.

INDEX

Mots-clés: esthétique, odorat, Peines d’amour perdues, peste, pétrarquisme
Keywords: aesthetics, Love’s Labour’s Lost, Petrarchism, plague, smell

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